

***DS State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)***  
***August 18, 2016***  
***Comfort Inn, Berlin***

**Attendees:**

Committee Members: Barbara Prine, Anne Bakeman, Susan Yuan, Edwin Place, Bethany Drum, Theresa Wood, Max Barrows, Connie Woodberry, Emily Anderson

Guests: Karen Topper, Amethyst Crowe, Kara Artus, Beth Gary, Colin Provencher, Bart Mair, Mark Utter

State Employees: Kirsten Murphy, Jennifer Perkins, June Bascom, Roy Gerstenberger, Lisa Parro

**Introductions, Review Agenda, Meeting Minutes**

Introductions were made. Linda, the new co-chair, is having surgery so Theresa assisted as co-chair for the meeting.

The meeting minutes from the July meeting were reviewed. Anne moved to accept the minutes as written, Ed seconded. The meeting minutes were approved as written.

Barb requested to move the review and discussion of the DS regulations to later in the meeting, and asked to add a discussion about creating strategies to increase the wages and hours of direct care workers.

Membership

Nicole LeBlanc has submitted her resignation to the SPSC as she is moving to Maryland to do a 14-week Paul Marchand public policy internship at AUCD for people with disabilities. She has also been offered a consulting job with the Council on Quality & Leadership (CQL) visiting other states. Nicole is not planning to return to Vermont.

The request for reassignments of some of the SPSC positions, and Mark Utter's and David Ballou's requests for appointment are all pending in the Governor's office. It is expected that a decision will be made soon.

**DS Directors Update**

Greg, Julie, nor Marlys Waller were able to attend the August meeting; therefore, an update was not available.

### **Direct Care Workforce**

The direct care workforce is declining, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to find a support worker, which is impacting the essential needs of Vermonters. The decline is not due to one particular area, there are many areas that are affecting the reduction in the workforce.

Roy has researched information about the direct care workforce and has found multiple studies that have been completed. Two of the studies have been completed by DAIL; one was completed in 2008 by a legislative study group, and one was completed in 2014.

Roy has had some preliminary discussions with Melissa Bailey, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, and Commissioner Hutt has discussed this issue with Hal Cohen, Secretary of the Agency of Human Services.

Barb requested to have some time on the September meeting agenda to discuss the direct care workforce, and the need to develop a strategy to request a dramatic increase in pay for direct care workers.

### **DDSD Director Updates**

There have been no requests for new budget information or budget adjustment information. The state revenue is down, however, adjustment have been made so there will not be a rescission.

Theresa stated that last year there was a long discussion about one-time funding that was issued at the end of the year, and any one-time funding this year will also want to be discussed by the SPSC.

The rate increase for the providers have been issued.

### **Institute on Communication and Inclusion – Mark Utter**

Mark did a presentation at the Syracuse University, Institute on Communication and Inclusion, 2016 ICI Summer Institute in Colombia, MD. The Institute is known for their research on typing as a form of communication.

Mark's presentation was "Reaching Up Through the Keyboard to a Brighter Life." He gave an overview of his trip, experiences, and shared some photos.

### **SPSC Workgroup Recommendations**

A SPSC workgroup was created to review the drafted DS Regulations and bring input back to the SPSC Committee. The workgroup members that met were: Barb, Rachel, Theresa, Linda, and Ellen Malone, who represented the DS Directors since Greg or Julie could attend. Clare McFadden from DDSD also attended. The workgroup reviewed parts 1, 2, and 3 before running out of time.

A handout was distributed from the workgroup with their suggestions/comments, and the SPSC committee reviewed and discussed them. It was felt that the subcommittee had more work to do, and additional meetings were necessary.

Stuart Schurr, from DAIL, has created a timeline for the DS Regulations based on required steps in the process. The deadline for preliminary comments is 8/26. There will be public hearings in which formal information and questions can be made.

A formal, unified response from the SPSC Committee will be submitted during the comment period.

### **SPSC Announcements**

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act has had some rule changes, and there are now 3 states who have programs available nationwide. The Vermont ABLE Task Force is convening a meeting with organizations on 9/23, at 10:00 at the State House to discuss the possibility of fee mitigation for Vermonters. (*Information about the Vermont ABLE Task Force can be found at: <http://www.vermonttreasurer.gov/reports/ABLE-task-force>*)